

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. HATCH, Mr. DEWINE, and Mr. KOHL):

S. 2494. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 151 et seq.) to enhance the ability of direct broadcast satellite and other multichannel video providers to compete effectively with cable television systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. MOYNIHAN (for himself and Mr. D'AMATO):

S. 2495. A bill to establish the Kate Mullany National Historic Site in the State of New York, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SPECTER:

S. 2496. A bill to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in Aspinwall, Pennsylvania, as the "H. John Heinz III Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center"; to the Committee on Veterans Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. TORRICELLI (for himself, Mr. D'AMATO, Mr. MURKOWSKI, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. DASCHLE, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. BENNETT, and Mr. HARKIN):

S. Res. 279. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate supporting the right of the United States citizens in Puerto Rico to express their desires regarding their future political status; considered and agreed to.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. WELLSTONE:

S. 2489. A bill to amend the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 and the Higher Education Act of 1965 to establish and improve programs to increase the availability of quality child care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT ACT

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, right now in our country there are about 10 million children—of course, when I talk about children, I am talking about their parents as well—who are eligible for good developmental child care opportunities. As it turns out, we provide assistance to 1.4 million out of this 10 million. In other words, fully 86 percent of children who are eligible to receive some assistance so that they will get better child care in those critical early years receive no assistance at all.

I introduce today this piece of legislation, which I have called the Child Development Act. I have been working on it for the last year and a half. Altogether, over the next 5 years, it calls for \$62 billion, about \$12 billion—less than 1 percent of the budget—to be invested in the health, skills, intellect and character of our children.

About \$37.5 billion just increases funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program (CCDBG), which has been a proven success in providing more money so that we can expand child care in our States and provide help to many working families that need this help.

In addition, the bill provides funding for improving afterschool programs. We have funds that are set aside to improve the quality of child care. Children Defense Fund studies have shown that six out of seven child care facilities in this country provide only poor-to-mediocre service, and one out of eight centers actually put children at risk.

There is additional funding for professional training, for new construction, and I say to my colleagues, there is also funding for loan forgiveness, which is the effort that I have been working on with my colleague, Senator DEWINE from Ohio, so that those men and women who do their undergraduate work and receive training in early childhood development, where the wages are so low, at least will receive loan forgiveness which will help them. Finally, there is some \$13 billion in tax credits for low- and middle-income working parents to help them afford child care.

Research has shown that much of what happens in life depends upon the first three years of development. The brain is so profoundly influenced during this time that the brain of a three-year-old has twice as many synapses (connections between brain cells) as that of her adult parents. The process of brain development is actually one of "pruning" out the synapses that one does not need (or more accurately, does not use) from those that become the brains standard "wiring." This is why the first three years of development are so important—this is the time that the brain must develop the wiring that is going to be used for the rest of one's life. According to a report on brain development published by the Families and Work Institute, "Early care and nurture have a decisive, long lasting impact on how people develop, their ability to learn, and their capacity to control their own emotions." If children do not receive proper care before the age of three, they never receive the chance to develop into fully functioning adults.

We are not allowing our children a chance in life when we do not provide them with proper care in their early years. If America is to achieve its goal of equal opportunity for our children, we need to start with proper care in their early years. It is a painful statistic then that our youngest citizens are also some of the poorest Americans. One out of every four of our country's 12 million children under the age of three live in poverty. It becomes very difficult to break out of the cycle of poverty if poor children are not allowed to develop into fully functioning adults.

Yet many parents in America do not have the option of providing adequate care for their children. For parents who can barely afford rent it is nearly impossible to take advantage of the Family Medical Leave Act, and sacrifice 12 weeks of pay in order to directly supervise a child. Many mothers need to return to work shortly after giving birth and find that the only options open to them are to place their children in care that is substandard, even potentially dangerous—but affordable. According to the Children's Defense Fund, six out of seven child care centers provide only poor to mediocre care, and one in eight centers provide care that could jeopardize children's safety and development. The same study said that one in three home-based care situations could be harmful to a child's development. How can we abide by these statistics?

This is a serious problem, and frighteningly widespread. The eligibility levels set for receiving child care aid through the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) is 85 percent of a state's median income. Nationally, this comes out to about \$35,000 for a family of three in 1998. However, according to the Children's defense fund, fully half of all families with young children earn less than \$35,000 per year. Half! A family that has two parents working full time at minimum wage earns only \$21,400 per year. This is not nearly enough to even dream of adequate child care.

Child care costs in the United States for one child in full day care range from \$4,000 to \$10,000 a year. It is not surprising that, on average, families with incomes under \$15,000 a year spend 23 percent of their annual incomes on child care. And in West Virginia, if a family of three makes more than that \$15,000, they no longer qualify for child care aid! In fact, thirty-two states do not allow a family of three which earns \$25,000 a year (approximately 185 percent of poverty) to qualify for help. Only four states in our nation set eligibility cut offs for receiving child care assistance at 85 percent of median family income, the maximum allowed by federal law. There is obviously not enough funding to support the huge need for child care assistance in our nation, and that is why I am proposing the Child Care Development Act.

There is widespread support for expanded investments to improve the affordability and quality of child care. A recent survey of 550 police chiefs found that nine out of ten police chiefs surveyed agreed that "America could sharply reduce crime if government invested more in programs to help children and youth get a good start" such as Head Start and child care. Mayors across the country identified child care, more than any other issue, as one of the most pressing issues facing children and families in their communities in 1996 survey. A recent poll found that a bipartisan majority of those polled